

March 28, 2011

KENTUCKY: The Commonwealth experienced another wet week during the first week in March as two different systems dumped widespread rainfall on the state. Temperatures were also above normal as the southerly flow that brought in moisture also brought in warmer than normal air. Drought conditions in the western part of the state were lessened by the heavy rainfall. Temperatures for the period averaged 48 degrees across the state which was 4 degrees warmer than normal and 2 degrees warmer than the previous period. High temperatures averaged from 59 in the West to 59 in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 37 degrees in the West to 38 degrees in the East. Precipitation (liq. equ.) for the period totaled 2.64 inches statewide which was 1.67 inches above normal and 272% of normal. Precipitation totals by climate division, West 2.24 inches, Central 2.83 inches, Bluegrass 2.48 inches and East 3.00 inches, which was 1.18, 1.81, 1.62 and 2.06 inches above normal.

For the period March 7-13, Kentucky received above normal precipitation for the third straight week. Rainfall came from yet another strong low pressure system that brought in ample moisture from the Gulf. Temperatures were just above normal for the week, which made this the 4th week in a row with above normal temperatures. This past week's rainfall and the previous 2 have erased any drought conditions across the state, and crop moisture indices are extremely wet all across the state. Temperatures for the period averaged 46 degrees across the state which was 1 degree warmer than normal and 2 degrees cooler than the previous period. High temperatures averaged from 55 in the West to 56 in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 39 degrees in the West to 35 degrees in the East. Precipitation (liq. equ.) for the period totaled 1.75 inches statewide which was 0.77 inches above normal and 178% of normal. Precipitation totals by climate division, West 1.86 inches, Central 1.76 inches, Bluegrass 1.89 inches and East 1.48 inches, which was 0.83, 0.73, 0.99 and 0.51 inches above normal.

The third week in March experienced above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. Temperatures were the warmest later in the week, with highs in the 70s and even 80s in some locations. This was also the first drier than normal week since mid February. Despite being just below normal for the week, the rainfall early this week and from the previous 3 weeks was enough to end all drought conditions across the Commonwealth. Temperatures for the period averaged 55 degrees across the state which was 8 degrees warmer than normal and 10 degrees warmer than the previous period. High temperatures averaged from 64 in the West to 63 in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 47 degrees in the West to 44 degrees in the East. Precipitation (liq. equ.) for the period totaled 0.74 inches statewide which was 0.28 inches below normal and 73% of normal. Precipitation totals by climate division, West 0.95 inches, Central 0.61 inches, Bluegrass 0.80 inches and East 0.59 inches, which was 0.13, 0.46, 0.13 and 0.41 inches below normal.

The last full week in March was also the first week of spring. Highs for the first half of the week were in the 70s and even 80s across the Commonwealth. However, by mid week a strong cold front moved through the state. This brought scattered showers and strong to severe thunderstorms, and much colder temperatures later in the week. Temperatures for the period averaged 52 degrees across the state which was 3 degrees warmer than normal and 2 degrees cooler than the previous period. High temperatures averaged from 59 in the West to 58 in the East. Low temperatures averaged from 46 degrees in the West to 44 degrees in the East. Precipitation (liq. equ.) for the period totaled 0.47 inches statewide which was 0.57 inches below normal and 45% of normal. Precipitation totals by climate division, West 0.55 inches, Central 0.48 inches, Bluegrass 0.26 inches and East 0.61 inches, which was 0.56, 0.62, 0.68 and 0.41 inches below normal.

Producers continue making planting decisions for the upcoming 2011 crop season. Costs of inputs are being weighed against anticipated selling prices. Tobacco growers are waiting for word on contracts. Farmers were busy performing routine equipment maintenance in preparation for the upcoming planting season.